

Texas House soundly rejects school vouchers

April 6, 2017

AUSTIN—The Texas House of Representatives rejected school vouchers, voting 103-44 for a budget amendment that would prohibit public money for self-described “school choice” measures.

The April 6 House vote came one week after the Texas Senate voted 18-13 in favor of a bill to create education savings accounts and a tax credit scholarship program to fund private school tuition. In a concession to senators from rural districts, the bill excluded counties with a population less than 285,000, unless voters petition to participate.

Rep. Abel Herrero, D-Corpus Christi, introduced the amendment to the House’s proposed two-year budget.

The amendment explicitly says taxpayer funds “may not be used to pay for or support a school voucher, education savings account, or tax credit scholarship program or a similar program through which a child may use state money for nonpublic education.”

“This is a win for Texas school children and a positive step forward for our neighborhood schools,” Herrero said.

The vote underscores the sharp division between the House and Senate in this legislative session, as personified in the leadership of Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, R-Houston, an ardent supporter of school vouchers, and Speaker of the House Joe Straus, R-San Antonio.



Charles Foster Johnson “We are deeply grateful for the leadership of Speaker Straus and the overwhelming majority of Texas House members who realize that Texans love and support their neighborhood and community public schools—and do not want to see them privatized through school vouchers,” said Charles Foster Johnson, executive director of Pastors for Texas Children.

“We pray that the Texas Legislature will cease their dabbling into this violation of God’s gift of religious liberty for all people, and will begin focusing on the real needs of our 5.3 million Texas public schoolchildren. We humbly remind our elected officials that universal education is a fundamental human right for all children, mandated by the Texas Constitution and clearly taught by people of faith everywhere.”